

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
February 28, 2007, 4:30 p.m.
Council Chambers**

PRESENT

Trena Carter
Ian Kohen
Greg Lewis
Tony McClendon
Akua Ofori-Boateng
Gil Palmer
John Roberts
John Stroh

ABSENT

Jay Myers
Jason Staley
Wes Roy

***** Meeting Called to Order *****

STAFF PRESENT:

Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith and Secretary, Lula Young.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Secretary Roberts called roll. **Commissioner Carter moved to accept the January Minutes as submitted, Commissioner Ofori-Boateng seconded. Motion carried.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

On behalf of Commissioner Lewis, staff secretary provided the Treasurer's report with the beginning balance, as of January 31, 2007, at \$4,773.74. One payment of \$8.00 was received from the purchase an Oral History video leaving the February 23, 2007 balance at \$4,781.74.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley informed Commissioners of the resignation of Commissioner Wes Roy due to a promotion requiring his increased presence in Cape Coral, Florida. Commissioner Roy will be honored at the 2007 annual dinner. New commissioner applications will be provided to Council liaison, Craig Hawes for review and appointment of a new commissioner.

Director Tinsley reported that due to Commissioner Roy's resignation, a new liaison would need to be appointed to the Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee. Committee Chairperson, Rob Aspy has contacted the Director with a request for the new liaison appointment. Director Tinsley advised that Commissioner Ofori-Boateng is willing to accept the appointment if that is the will of the Commission.

Director Tinsley continued her update of office activities, highlighting training she provided for all of the English as a Second Language teachers, assistants and the ESL council. She also

taught two organizational behavior classes at I.U.P.U.C. on diversity. Deputy Director Smith has been involved in multiple intakes, some with complicated fact patterns. Director Tinsley shared that staff has also been handling intensive technical assistance requiring a lot of research.

The speaker invitation was sent out to Judy Shepard, the second week of February, as requested by Commissioners. A response was received from their executive director, Gregory Lewis, advising that Ms. Shepard is booked for the month of April and will be out of the country during the month of May and therefore unable to accept the invitation. Director Tinsley went on to advise that a letter has been sent to the next potential speaker, Berenice Ruhl and approximately a week will be allowed for a response. The annual request to the mayor for budgetary support has been submitted for his approval.

Deputy Director Smith reported a positive impression of the Economic Diversity Council's first Expo, held in conjunction with black history month. She identified one speaker, an African-American woman, who is over the I.U.'s Minority Health Studies Department as an excellent speaker. Charles Edwards, assistant principal of East High School spoke as well. Discussion ensued. Deputy Director Smith also noted an increase in Black History month activities than in previous years.

Director Tinsley asked Commissioners if a new liaison to the Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee would be appointed.

Commissioner Kohen moved to appoint Commissioner Akua Ofori-Boateng as the liaison to the Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee. Commissioner McClendon seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

OPEN FORUM/CURRENT EVENTS & COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

POSSIBLE ANNUAL DINNER SPEAKER: Commissioner Kohen shared his experience with a recent speaker, Reggie Williams. Identified as a very dynamic and interesting speaker, Mr. Williams is an advocate of diversity. Commissioner Kohen recommended him as a potential speaker for future dinners.

MARRIAGE AMENDMENT REQUEST: Director Tinsley inquired if Commissioners had an opportunity to review the emailed request received from Rhonda Fischer, President of the Gay/Straight Alliance, asking Commissioners to communicate with the state legislature that the Commission is in opposition to the marriage amendment (Senate Joint Resolution 007). Both Director Tinsley and Commissioner Stroh provided an overview of the resolution, language and offered their opinions of the potential challenges involving the legal interpretation of Senate Joint Resolution – 007 if it is added to the state constitution. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Kohen moved that the Commission send a letter to Senator Walker, the Senate Pro Tem, Governor, Lt. Governor and Representatives. Point of Order by Commissioner McClendon with an addendum to copy the letter to Mayor Armstrong and the City Council members stating the Commission's position on Senate Joint Resolution 007. Commissioner Stroh seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

HATE/BIAS CRIME LEGISLATION: Director Tinsley shared the second request of the G/SA as submitted by President Fischer, for the Commission to support the language of House Bill 1459, legislation on hate/bias crimes. Discussion ensued. Commissioners supported Director Tinsley in her offer to send a letter to the G/SA president to advise that the Commissioners are willing to work with the G/SA on the hate crime issue and request their suggestions.

ESSAY/ART CONTEST:

Director Tinsley asked for volunteers to assist in the distribution of the essay and art contest packets. Commissioners Roberts and Lewis volunteered.

Director Tinsley shared her idea for the contest topic as, “The Avenue of the Righteous” – recognizing bravery on behalf of others. Commissioners discussed the input received from area teachers requesting a follow-up to the 2006 Bullying topic for this year’s contest. She also shared the feedback received from some administrators about the 2006 topic. Discussion ensued with Commissioners supporting “The Avenue of the Righteous” as the topic for the 2007 contest.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION:

The slate of officers was presented: Chairperson, Commissioner Palmer; Vice Chairperson, Anthony (Tony) McClendon; Secretary, John Roberts; Treasurer, Akua Ofori-Boateng. No additional nominations were submitted from the floor. The vote was unanimous for each position.

LIAISON UPDATE – INTERFAITH FORUM:

Commissioner Roberts reported the Interfaith Forum meeting was canceled due to inclement weather.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Ofori-Boateng seconded. Meeting adjourned.